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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 23, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 23, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

YENI SAFAK: In an interview with the Deutsche Welle, the European Parliament Joint Parliamentary Commission Chairperson Joost Lagendijk said that he believed that some circles within the military had an interest in the continuation of clashes with PKK. He has been quoted as saying "the Semdinli incident is not a fantasy, and that the military is the true boss in the Southeast is a fact. The Kurdish issues will not reach a solution as long as it continues like this. I believe that the government, as a civilian administration, has to go to that area and seek a solution to the problem."

HURRIYET: During his visit to the Turkish Chief of General Staff, the Israeli Chief of Staff Lt. General Dan Halutz expressed that his country would supply Turkey with high-technology surveillance equipment so that Turkey could cover its problematic border with Iraq more effectively and prevent PKK militants from infiltrating Turkish territory.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Following an autopsy conducted on seven PKK militants killed in clashes with the GOT forces in Savur district of Mardin in June 21, 1995, the militants' bodies had been buried in a lime well because it was getting dark, the then Dereici Jandarma Commander, Noncommissioned Officer T.K., told the public prosecutor investigating the case. A village guard involved in the incident said that they covered the lime well after the burial so that it would not be recognized.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: GOT forces, during an operation in Silvan district of Diyarbakir, detained six Democratic Society party members for unspecified reasons.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: A weekly Turkish-Kurdish eight-page newspaper is being published in Van under the name of "Yeni Bakis" in Turkish and "Nerina Nu" in Kurdish. The newspaper's owner, Adil Harmanci said that the paper would contain short essays, proverbs, regional news, and articles in its Kurdish version.

CUMHURİYET: The Van Public Prosecutor's Office is getting ready to appeal the court's acquittal decision concerning the Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin's antiquities smuggling case. Charges had been brought against Rector Askin for allegedly unregistered historical artifacts found during a July 14, 2005 search of his house. Rector Askin, who had been accused of violating article 2863 on Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage, had been acquitted during a December 15, 2005 hearing. Claiming that some procedural errors had taken place during the hearing on December 15, the Van Public Prosecutor's Office (VPPO) claimed that Rector Yucel should have been punished and therefore the VPPO was getting ready to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

EKSPRES/BOLGE: At a press conference, the AK Party Adana Provincial Chairman, Abdullah Dogru, announced that asking for an early election was the same as betraying to the country. Dogru said that Turkey's agenda was being determined by external powers in the past, but today it was just the opposite, and Turkey had gained a reputation among the world communities thanks to the AK Party government. Mr. Dogru added that Turkey had been sunk in a swamp of debt before AK Party came to power and inflation dropped to 7 percent and interest rates to 1 percent under their governance.

EVRENSEL: Following the developments in the Semdinli, Yuksekova and Hakkari incidents about 1.5 months ago, the Yuksekova Brigade Commander, Brig. General Erdal Akpinar, pressed charges against the Gazi Elementary School Folklore Team on charges of wearing outfits resembling the PKK uniforms during a performance on October 29, Republic Day. The Ministry of Culture also wrote a letter to the Hakkari Provincial National Education Directorate ordering that the students should not wear the local outfit known as "sal-sepik" during performances. Esat Canan, the CHP deputy from Hakkari, said that it was a mistake to associate the local outfits with PKK and that the people in the region just wanted peace, and that approaching everything with skepticism was not right.

EVRENSEL: Talat Yorulmaz, who has been working as a temporary

village guard in Lice of Diyarbakir for six years, has been selected "Village Guard of the Year" for 2005 by the Kulp sub-governor's office. Yorulmaz has been awarded with a two-storey house for the services he had rendered. The Kulp Jandarma Commander, Cap. Erkan Sandikci, said Kulp residents and village guards suffered most from terror, and commended Yorulmaz.

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for his success.

EVRENSEL: It is reported that the files of only 350 persons have been examined and 109 persons have received payments out of 22,300 people applying to the Sirnak Governor's Office to benefit from the Compensation Law that allows payment for the terror-related losses of the villagers. The nine-person assessment committee is primarily focused on examining the files from 2004.

EVRENSEL: The Mardin Governor, Temel Kocaklar, announced at a ceremony organized in Omerli district that 16,000 villagers had returned to 127 of 129 villages that had been evacuated because of disturbances from terror. Governor Kocaklar added that 9,000 girls had been registered in schools under the "Let's Go to School Girls" campaign in the past two years.

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